



Drug Overdose Prevention Newscast

Nov 15, 2022

Updates

Indiana Providers Promoting Harm Reduction Strategies

So far this year, fourteen Vanderburgh County residents have died from fentanyl overdoses. Steve Lockyear, Vanderburgh County coroner, notes that fentanyl-related deaths have soared in the past twenty years. "Twenty years ago, when I was at the sheriff's office, we were not seeing any fentanyl deaths. We were looking at 20 overdose deaths a year. Last year, we were at 106 deaths".

In response to increasing fentanyl-related overdoses, Indiana counties are employing more harm reduction strategies. In Vanderburgh County, harm reduction methods are a combination of efforts from grassroots organizations and treatment providers. The Evansville Recovery Alliance, a local nonprofit organization, distributes fentanyl-testing strips and Narcan at no cost. CleanSlate Centers, a medication-assisted treatment provider, also serves the Evansville area. There are still significant barriers to medication-assisted treatment with many patients facing stigma and skeptics deeming the treatment "a drug for a drug". James Evans, area manager for CleanSlate Centers, debunks this misconception: "We're not enabling this. What we're doing is preventing withdrawals". Many experts at the forefront of the substance use and overdose crisis expect harm reduction approaches such as the ones in Vanderburgh County to be implemented more throughout Indiana.

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Indiana University Researchers Exploring new Substance Use Disorder Therapy Technology

Researchers from Indiana University received funding from the National Institute of Health to develop a new therapy for individuals with substance use disorders. The treatment involves a virtual reality with a "future self" avatar. IU School of Medicine Assistant Professor of Psychiatry Brandon Oberlin says, "this experience enables people in recovery to have a personalized virtual experience, in alternate futures resulting from the choices they made". A pilot study found that participants had a positive experience with the virtual reality technology. Oberlin hopes that the technology will specifically target individuals in early recovery, because those in earlier stages of treatment typically face higher risk of relapse. He also wants to distinguish this technology not as a cure of substance use disorder, but rather a supplemental tool for psychotherapists. The technology will continue to be developed and tested by IU-affiliated startup Relate XR LLC and Indianapolis-based reality startup Half Full Nelson.

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Beyond Substance: Episode 3

The Marion County Public Health Department has released the third episode of their podcast, "Beyond Substance". In this episode, the hosts continue their discussion about frontline workers.

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Upcoming Events

QPR: Suicide Prevention Training

November 15, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. EST

Bedford, IN– River's Edge Fellowship Church

2900 35th Street, Bedford, IN 47421

In this training, participants will learn how to break down the stigma about mental illness, suicide, and seeking out help. QPR training stands for "question, persuade, refer", and this framework helps participants recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to refer someone to help. Sara Kleber-Lowery will be leading the session. As a certified QPR instructor and System of Care Coordinator for Lawrence County, she has over eight years of experience working in youth mental health. This is a free event, but registration is highly recommended. Visit the link to register and to find QPR trainings in your area.

[CLICK THIS LINK](#)

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day

November 19, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Hosted by: Johnson County Public Library– Franklin Branch Community Room

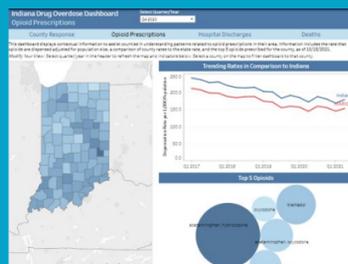
401 State Street, Franklin, IN, 46131

International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is an opportunity for survivors of suicide loss to connect through their shared experience. Upstream Prevention, a Johnson-County based nonprofit organization, is hosting the event. Register at the link below.

[CLICK THIS LINK](#)

Indiana Drug Overdose Dashboard

Please visit the [Indiana Drug Overdose Dashboard](#), where you will find data from 2017 up to provisional data for 2021. In this dashboard, you will find data regarding opioid prescriptions, hospital discharges, and drug-related deaths. You can use this dashboard to explore overdose data at the county and state levels.



To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers

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